



File Code: 1950
Date: June 18, 2010

Dear Forest User,

Introduction

The Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests will be considering a number of project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future. A separate decision will be made on each individual proposal. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments so they can be included in our analysis. Proposals are included in Part A or Part B (attached) based on their appeal eligibility and comment requirements. A summary of the projects is shown in the following table.

Part	Appealable?	Project Title	Forest	District
A	No	<i>Fourth of July Park Development</i>	Nez Perce	Red River
A	No	<i>Pete King Landing Decomaction</i>	Clearwater	Lochsa
B	Yes	<i>O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment</i>	Nez Perce	Moose Creek

Background

The Nez Perce Clearwater National Forests have made a preliminary assessment that these proposals fall within categories of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6 that are excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude use of the categories. Brief project descriptions are included below.

Thank you for your interest in the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,


RICK BRAZELL
Forest Supervisor

cc: Marty Gardner, Steve Lucas, Terry Nevius, Craig Trulock, Matthew Bienkowski, Joe Hudson

Attachments:
Part A: Non-Appealable Projects
Part B: Appealable Projects



PART A: NON-APPEALABLE PROJECTS

Introduction

The Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forest will be considering the following two project proposals and conducting environmental analysis in the near future: the *Fourth of July Park Development* and the *Pete King Landing Decomposition* projects. Please review the following proposals and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis.

These decisions are not subject to appeal.

How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about these proposals and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us for the *Fourth of July Park Development* and the *Pete King Landing Decomposition* projects by July 21, 2010. All submissions made pursuant to this notice may be made available for public inspection at times and places and in a manner convenient to the public business (7 CFR Part 1 Subpart B 1-27(c)).

Written comments should be submitted to Marty Gardner, NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

Nez Perce National Forest

Red River Ranger District

Fourth of July Park Development

Legal Description: T26N R8E Section 27 SWSW

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Narrative Summary: The Nez Perce National Forest proposes to issue a special use permit to Mike Wakefield for a 100-by-185 foot area on National Forest system lands near Dixie, Idaho. Mike Wakefield proposes to develop this area for the traveling public and residents in Dixie, Idaho. He proposes preparing the site by removing dead and dying trees, pruning live trees, filling ditches and holes for safety, and establishing drainage ditches and sediment traps, and then adding pathways, tables, and barbeque stands. Existing signs and parking may be improved. This site would be maintained by pruning trees and brush, and cutting grass.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Randy Borniger at (208) 842-2245.

Clearwater National Forest

Lochsa Ranger District

Pete King Landing Decompaction

Legal Description: T33N R7W Sections 29 N and 20 S

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(5) Regeneration of an area to native tree species, including site preparation that does not involve the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion.

Narrative Summary: The Lochsa Ranger District proposes to decompact two existing landings on approximately 5.9 acres at Mileposts 1.4 and 2.0 along Forest Road 453 adjacent to Pete King Creek to promote water infiltration and establish vegetation. The decompaction is necessary to ensure survival of tree and shrub species. Decompaction consists of loosening soil at the existing landing surface to a depth of 18 inches and a clod size no larger than 10 inches. Decompaction could occur in several ways, most likely with an excavator bucket. A portion of the landing at Milepost 1.4 would not be decompact.

Project Information: If you have questions or want more information on this project, please contact Anne Connor at (208) 476-8235.

PART B: APPEALABLE PROJECTS

Introduction

The Nez Perce National Forest will be considering the following project proposal and conducting environmental analysis in the near future: the *O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment* project. Please review the following proposal and submit your comments as described below so they can be included in our analysis. This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215, as clarified in the court order dated October 19, 2005 by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in Case No. CIV F-03-6386JKS.

How to Provide Comments

We are interested in your comments about this proposal and invite you to send site-specific written comments to us. For the *O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment* project, written, facsimile, hand-delivered and oral comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for this proposal. One should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Written comments should be submitted to Marty Gardner, NEPA Coordinator, Nez Perce Supervisor's Office, 104 Airport Road, Grangeville, Idaho 83530. The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Oral comments must be provided during normal business hours via telephone (208) 983-1950 or in person. Electronic comments should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf) or Word (.doc) to comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment on the proposal, please include the following: (1) your name, address, and (if possible) your telephone number, and organization represented (if any); (2) title of the project on which you are submitting comments; (3) specific facts and related rationale concerning this project that you feel should be considered. For appeal eligibility, each individual must either sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Additional information regarding how to comment can be found at 36 CFR 215.6.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments may not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only very limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the available options at that time (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Nez Perce National Forest

O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment Project

Introduction

The Moose Creek Ranger District of the Nez Perce National Forest is proposing to add 1400 acres as a secondary containment area for Units 2 and 4 of the O'Hara Forest Health Project located on the Moose Creek Ranger District at T32N R7E Section 25, and T32N R8E Sections 29, 30, 31, 32, Boise Meridian, Idaho County, Idaho (see attached map). The proposed category for this project is: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6) Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.

Background

In 2006, the O'Hara Forest Health Project Decision Memo authorized prescribed burning in Units 2 and 4 on approximately 343 and 579 acres, respectively. Upon implementation in 2008, the original containment by natural barriers was not adequate to contain the prescribed burn within the units. Therefore, ignition was halted, and the current proposed action to add a secondary containment area was initiated.

The project area includes the area covered in the O'Hara Forest Health Project and the additional 1400 acres of secondary containment area.

Purpose and Need

The **Purpose and Need** of the O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment Project are derived from the difference between the existing and desired conditions.

Purpose (Desired Condition): The purpose of this project is to allow secondary containment in the event of a prescribed fire exceeding the boundaries of Units 2 and 4 as designated in the O'Hara Forest Health Project Decision Memo.

Forestwide management direction applicable to this project is: "The prescribed fire planned ignition option is for those management areas where burning will be done to achieve management objectives such as browse rehabilitation, slash disposal, site preparation, etc" (USDA Forest Service 1987, p. II-26).

O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment Project is located within Management Areas 8.2 and 15. Management Area standards applicable to this project for these areas are:

Management Area 8.2 and 15

- ✓ Planned and unplanned ignitions, when within prescription, will be allowed to burn to enhance resource values (USDA Forest Service 1987, p. III-21 and III-47).

Need (Existing Condition): The original decision called for natural barriers such as ridges and wet draws be used to contain fire spread, with little or no hand fire line construction. At that time it was assumed that the distinct change in fuel type (dry grand fir and Douglas-fir on the

southwest facing slopes in the unit compared to the moist cedar on the north and northeast facing slopes outside the unit) would be sufficient to limit fire spread.

It was discovered during implementation and subsequent monitoring of prescribed fire in Units 2 and 4 during September of 2008 that fuel moistures in the 10- and 100-hour fuels outside the unit and project area were drier than inside the unit. Fire quickly spread into the large accumulations of dead and down woody debris along the edge of the units and presented significant control problems. Current fire policy dictates that prescribed fire spread outside of the project area must be contained or declared a wildfire.

Crews were generally successful at containing the spread of surface fire during the day; however, each night, burned out snags would fall and roll down the steep slope causing a consistent increase in fire spread. This pattern continued for approximately five days until sufficient moisture was received to extinguish the fire. The current fire policy and limitations of the existing decision and analysis area caused many chains of fire line construction despite fire behavior and fire effects that were well within prescription parameters outlined in the burn plan. Crews were also subject to increased exposure to falling and rolling snags during that time.

Proposed Action

The Nez Perce National Forest proposes to modify the northernmost portion of the project area boundary of the O'Hara Forest Health Project (Decision Memo signed 1/23/2007) to allow the Selway River and Dave Creek to be used as a secondary containment lines in the event that prescribed fire exceeds the boundaries of Units 2 and 4 designated in the O'Hara Forest Health Project Decision Memo. The new boundary would add approximately 1400 acres of the Lower Selway Canyon to the existing O'Hara project area. The new boundary would begin at Stillman Point and proceed north down Dave Creek to the Selway River, then generally west down the Selway River, staying above the O'Hara campground and rejoining the existing project boundary (see attached map).

Prescribed fire would not be allowed within the viewshed of the O'Hara campground or interpretive trail. The proposed action does not change the unit boundaries planned for ignition in the O'Hara Forest Health Project. No additional ignitions are planned under with this proposed action.

The proposed action would modify the project area boundary so that if fire from Units 2 and 4 were to enter the new boundary, contingency options could include monitoring the fire and allowing it to burn if it is within prescription. The proposed action would also prevent the need for potentially resource damaging hand line construction prior to burning or in the event of an escape. If the fire were to exceed the unit boundaries, it may be allowed to back down the slope, with the Selway River and Dave Creek serving as the project area boundaries. No additional ignition outside the units is planned. Approximately 300 of the 900 acres planned for ignitions in Units 2 and 4 were burned in 2007.

Portions of the proposed boundary line modification would be within the recreation portion of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater Wild and Scenic River Corridor. The proposed actions are consistent with management direction in the River Plan: Middle Fork Clearwater including the Lochsa and Selway and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. A low intensity fire backing down the

slope within the proposed project area would have minimal effect on the visual objectives for the Wild and Scenic River.

Additionally, the proposed boundary line modification is within the O'Hara / Falls Creek Inventoried Roadless Area. The proposed action is consistent with management direction for Backcountry Restoration areas and Forest Plan Special Areas (WSR).

Design Criteria

- Adhere to the O'Hara Forest Health Project Decision Memo, including design criteria and mitigation measures.

Environmental Issues

Potential issues identified through consultation with Forest Service resource specialists and from issues identified from similar past projects include:

- Effects to soil, watershed, vegetation, and other forest resources;
- Effects to wildlife and potential disruption of wildlife habitats;

Decisions to Be Made

The Moose Creek District Ranger is the deciding official for this proposal. The decisions to be made are:

- Whether or not to add 1400 acres as a secondary containment area for Units 2 and 4 of the O'Hara Forest Health Project.
- If the area is added, what stipulations to implementation would be required?

O'Hara Prescribed Fire Boundary Amendment Project Map

